

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 USIA-15 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05

CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 L-03 H-02

PA-02 PRS-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-01 INR-07 NSAE-00

XMB-04 OPIC-06 LAB-04 SIL-01 PC-05 /100 W

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R 041203Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

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UNCLAS LIBREVILLE 0433

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ECON, GB

SUBJ: RENEW THE RENOVATION -- A NEW EMPHASIS IN GABON'S
ECONOMIC POLICY?

1. IN MARCH 1 RADIO-TV INTERVIEW, PRESIDENT BONGO EXPLAINED HIS THEME FOR 1976 "RENEW THE RENOVATION" AS SHIFT IN EMPHASIS OF ECONOMIC POLICY. DURING FIRST TEN YEARS OF GABON'S INDEPENDENCE, HE SAID, DYNAMIC FORCE IN COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT HAD BEEN LIBERAL ECONOMIC POLICIES. TIME HAS NOW COME, SAID PRESIDENT, FOR CHANGE IN POLICIES TO PERMIT MORE STATE PARTICIPATION.

2. WHILE DETAILS REMAIN TO BE WORKED OUT THROUGH CONSULTATION AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH VARIOUS INTERESTS, BONGO SAID STATE WILL EVENTUALLY OWN 49 PERCENT OF ALL BUSINESS OPERATING IN COUNTRY. ANOTHER CHANGE IN MANAGEMENT PRACTICE, ACCORDING TO PRESIDENT, WILL BE REQUIREMENT THAT EACH COMPANY CREATE NEW "BUSINESS BOARD" WHICH WILL HAVE CONSULTATIVE ROLE IN RUNNING COMPANY. SUCH BOARD WILL REPRESENT ALL ELEMENTS INVOLVED IN BUSINESS -- WORKERS, TECHNICIANS, AND ADMINISTRATORS -- AS WELL AS REPRESENTATIVES FROM ORGANIZED LABOR, MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS AND GOG. BONGO, HOWEVER, CAREFULLY POINTED OUT
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THAT FINAL VOICE IN RUNNING BUSINESSES WILL BE LEFT WITH

COMPANIES' DIRECTOR GENERALS.

3. COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING MARCH 3 EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT'S ECONOMIC POLICIES AS OUTLINED IN HIS PRESS INTERVIEW BUT NO MORE DETAILS FORTHCOMING.

4. COMMENT: THROUGHOUT PRESS INTERVIEW, BONGO APPEARED TO BE SPEAKING EXTEMPORANEOUSLY AND IT QUITE POSSIBLE THAT NEW ECONOMIC POLICIES ARE NO MORE THAN STATEMENT OF PRESIDENT'S INTENTIONS AT THIS POINT. DETAILS OF PROPOSED CHANGES AND POLICIES FOR THEIR IMPLEMENTATION PRESUMABLY REMAIN TO WORKED OUT IN WHAT IS LIKELY TO BE VERY LENGTHY PROCESS. STEIGMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS CONFERENCES, ECONOMIC PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LIBREV00433
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760082-1106
From: LIBREVILLE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760396/aaaadggc.tel
Line Count: 74
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cahillha
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 JUN 2004 by fisherem>; APPROVED <07 OCT 2004 by cahillha>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RENEW THE RENOVATION -- A NEW EMPHASIS IN GABON'S ECONOMIC POLICY?
TAGS: PINT, ECON, GB, (BONGO, ALBERT BERNARD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006